



Public Law 96-114, The Congressional Award Act

The Congressional Award

Fast Facts on America's Award for Youth

- **What is The Congressional Award?**

The Congressional Award is a public private partnership created by Congress to promote and recognize achievement, initiative and service in America's youth, ages 14 to 23. The Congressional Award provides a unique opportunity for young people to set and achieve personally challenging goals that build character and foster community service, personal development and citizenship. To earn a Congressional Award, participants set and achieve individual goals in four program areas:

- voluntary public service
- physical fitness
- personal development
- expeditions

All young people are equally able to earn The Congressional Award, because goals are set based on individual interest, need and ability. A young person is not selected to receive The Congressional Award; he or she earns it.

- **How are adults involved in the program?**

Adult volunteers play a very important role in The Congressional Award program. Adults advise participants on an individual basis, helping them set challenging but achievable goals. Adults also validate participants' activities in the four program areas.

- **How are the awards presented?**

Members of the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate recognize their constituents who earn Bronze and Silver Congressional Award Medals at local, citywide or statewide ceremonies. The Gold Congressional Award ceremony is held annually in the U.S. Capitol and is presided over by the leadership of the House and Senate. An unlimited number of Congressional Awards may be earned throughout the country.

- **How does the program operate locally?**

The National Office of the Congressional Award Foundation works with Congressional delegations, schools and communities to increase and promote participation in the program. In some areas of the country, Congressional Award Councils promote and administer the program at the local level, with assistance from the National Office.

- **How is the program funded?**

Created by Public Law 96-114, the Congressional Award Act, The Congressional Award receives no federal funding. It is fully funded by charitable contributions. Congress does assist the program by authorizing the U.S. Mint to strike the medals presented to the recipients. In addition, in-kind support is provided through the use of two rooms in the Ford House Office Building for the National Office. The Congressional Award covers the cost of all its equipment, postage and supplies, and remits the cost of phone service to the U.S. Treasury.

For more information or to register on line, visit our web site at

www.congressionalaward.org

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Program Requirements

The Congressional Award Program is about challenge. The Award offers young people the opportunity to set personally challenging goals and achieve them. Along the way, they serve their communities and learn about qualities like responsibility, citizenship, and the ability to plan and organize. There are six levels of Award—Bronze, Silver, and Gold Certificates and Bronze, Silver, and Gold Medals. Each level is cumulative. Time spent on one Award is carried on to the next level.

Certificate Level			
	Bronze	Silver	Gold
Minimum Hours Per Program Area			
Voluntary Public Service	30	60	90
Personal Development	15	30	45
Physical Fitness	15	30	45
Expedition/Exploration	One Day	Two Days	Three Days
Minimum Total Hours	60	120	180
Minimum Time to Earn The Award	No minimum	No minimum	6 Months

Medal Level			
	Bronze	Silver	Gold
Minimum Hours Per Program Area			
Voluntary Public Service	100	200	400
Personal Development	50	100	200
Physical Fitness	50	100	200
Expedition/Exploration	One Overnight	Two Consecutive Overnights	Four Consecutive Overnights
Minimum Total Hours	200	400	800
Minimum Time to Earn The Award	7 Months	12 Months	24 Months

The minimum age to earn an Award is 14.

Activities to earn Certificates and Medals must be completed by the participant's 24th birthday.



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BENEFITS

- The Congressional Award is a **non-competitive, voluntary** program that is open to all young people age 14 to 23.
- The program is **well – balanced**, containing four diverse program areas that encourage youth to explore new areas of their choosing and learn more about themselves and the world around them.
- Six levels of the Award provide **tangible evidence of success** and effort on the part of the young person, and many youth use their record of achievement in their **college, scholarship, or job applications**.
- Attracts both youth and adults of **all demographics**. An effective youth program attracts a large number of volunteers who derive great satisfaction from sharing their enthusiasm, experience and skills. This program can bridge many gaps – age, socioeconomic, race & religion.
- Provides an opportunity for young people to **learn from adults** who will encourage and support them along the way to earning a Congressional Award.
- Encourages the **establishment of community networks and links**. Enables disadvantaged youth to become a part of the community.
- The Award **empowers young people** to take a greater responsibility for their own lives, to discover new talents, to advocate on behalf of others, and to take positive action in the community.
- The Congressional Award program dovetails nicely with extra-curricular activities in schools, and various youth programs including Key Club, Service Clubs, Scouting, 4-H, HOBY, Close-up, etc. The Award can act as a **value-added component** for the personal development of young people.
- The program **establishes a sense of self-confidence**, and helps to enhance problem-solving skills and the ability to work as part of a team – traits that are valued by employers and institutions of higher education
- The Award scheme **promotes volunteerism**. Young adults who wish to respond to President Bush's appeal for increased volunteerism may do so by participating in the Congressional Award program.
- The Congressional Award program may help to encourage America's youth to lead a **healthier lifestyle** - by pursuing goals and activities in the areas of Physical Activity, Health, and Nutrition.
- The Congressional Award program is **fun!**



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The Congressional Award Advisor and Validator Guide

Why Advisors And Validators?

As an advisor or validator, you play an important role in a young person's pursuit of The Congressional Award. To earn the Award, participants set goals in four program areas: Voluntary Public Service; Personal Development; Physical Fitness; and Expedition/Exploration. **Advisors** guide participants through the goal-setting process in each of the four program areas and monitor their progress toward The Congressional Award. **Validators** assist the participant with individual activities.

While any 14 to 23 year old may pursue a Congressional Award, it takes the commitment of volunteer adults to help them realize their potential. Your part in The Congressional Award is essential. Your guidance will be remembered long after the participant successfully meets his or her goals and is presented a Bronze, Silver, or Gold Certificate or Medal by the United States Congress.

Who is eligible?

Any adult may serve as an advisor or validator with the exception of parents, relatives, and peers. Gold Medal Congressional Award earners may also serve, regardless of their age. Keep in mind that it is the responsibility of the young people to identify their advisor and validators.

Advisors meet with the young people while they set personally challenging goals, stay in touch while the participant pursues the Award, and provide assistance with the Record Book detailing their goals and activities. Teachers, coaches, neighbors, club sponsors, and civic leaders all make excellent advisors.

The appropriate validator depends on the participant's activities. Validators should be knowledgeable in the activities a participant pursues to achieve a particular goal. For example, if a young person's goal and activities involved basketball, a coach would make a suitable validator. Similarly, if a young person volunteered at an animal shelter, an employee or the volunteer coordinator would be an appropriate validator.

The Advisor's Role and Responsibilities

1. With the participant, review The Congressional Award requirements and guidelines as provided in the program booklet.
2. Assist the participant in setting goals that are personally challenging, achievable, worthwhile, measurable, and fulfilling.
3. Help the participant identify appropriate activities and qualified validators for each goal.

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4. Maintain periodic contact with the participant while he or she works toward The Congressional Award.
5. If the participant needs to revise goals, help him or her set new goals and find activities to achieve them.
6. Encourage the participant to obtain written comments and signatures from his or her validators as soon as an individual goal has been met.
7. Once the participant has completed the set activities for a given Award level, review his or her records and help complete the Record Book. Please be sure to provide comments. Make certain that you and the participant keep a photocopy of the Record Book.
8. Once the participant has mailed in the Record Book, work with him or her to set new goals and begin working on the next level of the Award.

The Validator's Role and Responsibilities

1. Review The Congressional Award requirements and guidelines listed in the participant's program booklet.
2. Discuss the specific requirements for the program area in which you'll be working with the participant.
3. Help the participant identify his or her starting level in a particular area of endeavor.
4. Make certain that the participant's goal is personally challenging, achievable, worthwhile, measurable, and fulfilling.
5. Once minimum hours and duration of activities have been met in your program area, review all of the appropriate documentation and sign the Record Book. Please be sure to provide comments.

National Office

If a participant is uncertain about how to proceed, please contact the Congressional Award National Office. Telephone calls from participants, advisors, and validators are welcome at any time.

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Sample Activities Pursued by Congressional Award Participants

Voluntary Public Service

“Produce a handbook containing information about service opportunities at United Way and other agencies for high school students.”

“Crime prevention...I want to train a quality Labrador puppy to become a narcotics K-9 and donate him to the Sheriff’s Department.”

“Provide visitation and aid to elderly people and shut-ins.”

“Collect, sort and distribute food for the needy through a community food bank.”

Personal Development

“Learn how to build with lumber and concrete...to properly construct a handicap accessible ramp to state codes and regulations.”

“Study the history and influences of different genres of music such as jazz, rap, and classical.”

“Learn and develop new styles of writing. I want to write a short story in each of the following areas: horror; science-fiction; classical; mystery; fantasy; and romance.”

Physical Fitness

“Move from a third degree purple belt to a black belt in Tae Kwon Do.”

“Improve my skills in springboard and platform diving so that I advance from the developmental to the junior Olympic level.”

“Improve my basketball skills to earn a position on the varsity basketball team.”

“Lift weights three times per week so that I can bench press 150 lbs.”

Expedition

“Take a trip to Washington, DC, and tour historic sights and buildings. I will coordinate with my Congressman’s office to tour the Capitol building and use Metro and maps to explore the city.”

“Plan and experience winter camping. I will camp in a tent for four nights, learn winter survival, cook on a fire and study wildlife.”

“Coordinate a trip to Luray Caverns in Virginia to explore natural formations and geology.”

“Camp at Washington’s Crossing on the Delaware River...learn how to pitch a tent, cook on an open fire and survive in the wilderness.”



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Notable Quotes From Congressional Award Recipients

"Through the Congressional Award I gained a greater understanding of the responsibilities we have to give back to our communities and country for the benefits granted us."

Gold recipient - North Hollywood, CA

"Service is essential in a community and, if kids learn this at a young age, everybody benefits."

Gold recipient - Denver, CO

"The Congressional Award brought into focus the incredible good that is done when we take time out of our busy lives to help those who really need us the most."

Gold recipient - Long Beach, CA

"I have had the opportunity to push myself toward overcoming obstacles I might otherwise not have faced."

Silver recipient - Palm City, FL

"The Congressional Award taught me the value of a good work ethic and a positive attitude."

Silver recipient - Stuart, FL

"I've learned to see the world with a positive outlook. The program has given me insight on how to deal with school, work, and community. It has made me a productive citizen."

Silver recipient - Bronx, NY

"My confidence improved as I reached the goals I set for myself."

Bronze recipient - Pelican Rapids, MN

"I think that it is important for high school students to be involved in programs that promote community service and self improvement."

Bronze registrant - Tom's River, NJ

"The Congressional Award challenged me in areas that I might never have considered."

Bronze recipient - Chesterfield, MO

"I gave up time to improve the lives of others, as well as my own, instead of just bumming around the house."

Bronze recipient - Sundance, WY

"This award has given me the confidence to do anything that I set out to do."

Bronze recipient - Stuart, FL



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 22, 1999

The Congressional Award Announces Partnership with Boy Scouts

Five Boy Scouts Receive Congressional Award Medals in Statuary Hall

Washington, DC—The Congressional Award Foundation announced today a partnership with Boy Scouts of America to expand the opportunities for more Boy Scouts to benefit from Congress' Award to young people for the acts of public service, citizenship and physical fitness they undertake. This is a natural partnership between two organizations - each chartered by Congress - that work to foster citizenship, youth education and commitment to community.

Also occurring today, five Boy Scouts received The Gold Congressional Award Medal in the U.S. Capitol in a ceremony presided over by the Joint Leadership of Congress. Christopher Alford, Scott Burright, Paul Ellison, Christopher Kruse and Amanda McGee were among 17 young people this year from across the country to receive the highest recognition Congress bestows upon young people. In order to earn the prestigious Gold Congressional Award, each young person must complete a minimum of 400 hours of voluntary public service, 200 hours of personal development, 200 hours of physical fitness, and an expedition/exploration of at least four consecutive overnights.

Signed into law in 1979, The Congressional Award is designed to promote initiative, achievement, and excellence among youth. The Award is non-competitive and open to all young people--regardless of physical, mental or socio-economic circumstances--between 14 and 23 who set and achieve goals in four areas: public service, personal development, physical fitness and expedition/exploration. They must set challenging goals for the betterment of themselves and their communities.

The Recipients

Christopher Alford, 26, of Park City, KY, served as a Boy Scout Scoutmaster for the voluntary public service component of the Award.. For personal development, he enhanced his skills in artwork and put his abilities to use by designing logos for nonprofits. For physical fitness, Christopher improved his golf techniques by increasing his arm and body strength. His expedition was a six-day, five-night backpacking trip. He said of his experiences in The Congressional Award program, "The most important thing I learned was, with dedication and a little hard work, you will succeed at all things you undertake."

MORE

Scott Burright, 20, of Grinnell, IA, completed more than 600 hours of service while earning The Gold Congressional Award. He served as a staff member at a Boy Scout Camp and also played a critical leadership role with Habitat for Humanity in Grinnell. To satisfy the personal development component of the Award, he held a part-time job while attending college full-time. For physical fitness, he set and achieved goals on his way to earning his letters in track and cross country. He went to Downe, England for his expedition. Scott said of his experiences in earning this prestigious Award, "By giving of myself, I have learned how to help others have a better life that is very gratifying to all. By participating in the program, I have grown immensely psychologically, physically and emotionally."

Paul Ellison, 23, of Springfield, VA, served underprivileged individuals and families in his community. He organized and participated in projects that included helping with yard work, house maintenance and teaching children with learning disabilities. He devoted himself to religious teachings for his personal development. His physical fitness goal was to design a fitness regime that would improve his overall health. He went on an expedition on the Mormon Trail where he learned more about his ancestors and his religion. "With such a large country I believe that opportunities to help others abound. This is what I learned while earning The Congressional Award—that the need is great," said Paul.

Christopher Kruse, 17, of Platte City, MO, volunteered at the Heritage Village Senior Citizen Home. He also assisted the disabled in his community where his responsibilities included facilitating dances, art projects and field trips. For personal development, Christopher learned to play all of the scales on a trumpet and played a solo at a district competition. For physical fitness, he challenged himself to improve his weight lifting ability and improve his endurance for roller blading. For his expedition, he backpacked for five days and four nights in state parks. "I have realized the importance of goals, planning how to carry out goals and what it takes to achieve the goals that I have set," he said.

Amanda McGee, 23, of Oregon City, served as an assistant Scoutmaster. She performed very specialized public service as a volunteer as a living historian. By serving at Civil War reenactments, she helped the public gain a better understanding of Civil War period clothing. For personal development, Amanda improved her understanding of the construction of Civil War period clothing. Her physical fitness goal involved a walking program and workouts at the gym. She planned and executed a seven-night expedition for 12 people aboard a boat.

The Congressional Award is a nonpartisan partnership between Congress and the private sector. Appointed by the Joint Leadership of Congress, a volunteer Board of Directors comprised of private sector individuals and members of Congress implements the program at the national level. The Congressional Award was established in 1979 by Public Law 96-114, The Congressional Award Act. More than 7,000 Congressional Awards have been earned, representing well over 1.5 million volunteer hours performed in community service across America. A public-private partnership, The Congressional Award Foundation a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that receives no federal funds. To register to earn The Congressional Award, call 1-888-80-AWARD, or visit the web site at: www.congressionalaward.org.

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Scouting Found

Government Warning: Stay Away From Mines!

Stay Out—Stay Alive. That's the message from the Mine Safety and Health Administration. At least 17

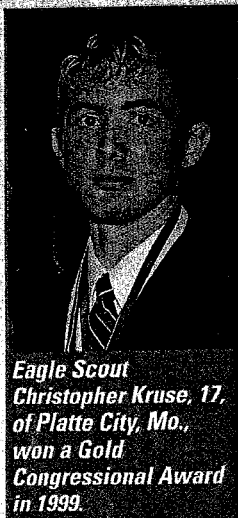
people died last year while playing in and around mines—most in drowning accidents in abandoned water-filled pits and quarries. For more information go to www.msha.gov.



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CONGRESSIONAL AWARDS FOR SCOUTS

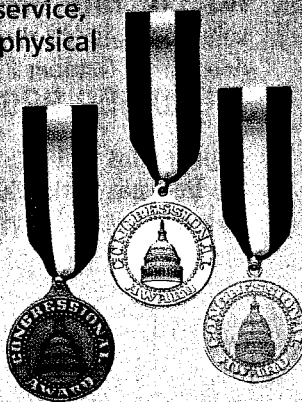
The Federal government is now honoring high school-age Scouts, Venturers, Explorers and Learning for Life participants with Congressional Awards for their activities and public service hours.



Eagle Scout
Christopher Kruse, 17,
of Platte City, Mo.,
won a Gold
Congressional Award
in 1999.

Scouts can earn bronze, silver or gold certificates and medals for achievement in four areas: volunteer public service, personal development, physical fitness and expedition/exploration activities.

To be considered for an award, you must register with the Congressional Award Foundation at a cost of \$10. Contact your local BSA council or visit www.congressionalaward.org.



Fast Facts

TUBE TALK

- ☛ First TV **station** with regular programming: WGY, Schenectady, N.Y., 1928.
- ☛ First U.S. TV **network broadcast**: NBC, 1940.
- ☛ U.S. homes **with a TV, 1950**: 3,880,000 or 9 percent of households.
- ☛ U.S. homes **with a TV, 1998**: 99.4 million, or 98 percent of households.
- ☛ First **video cassette recorder (VCR)**: Betamax, 1975.
- ☛ U.S. homes **with a VCR, 1998**: 85.9 million.
- ☛ U.S. homes **with cable TV, 1998**: 68.7 million.
- ☛ First TV **drama**: "The Queen's Messenger," 1928.
- ☛ First TV **game show**: "Spelling Bee," 1938, Britain.
- ☛ First **color TV series**: "The Cisco Kid," 1950.
- ☛ First popular **kids' show**: "The Howdy Doody Show," 1947.
- ☛ First TV **commercial**: Bulova watches, 1941, WNBT-NY.
- ☛ **Cost** to air Bulova commercial: \$9 for 20 seconds.
- ☛ **Cost of commercial air time today**: Varies, a 30-second commercial airing during the 1998 Super Bowl went for \$1.3 million.
- ☛ First TV **dinner**: Swanson's turkey dinner, 1954.
- ☛ **Average time** American households spend watching TV each day: 6 hours 52 minutes.
- ☛ Estimated amount of TV a child has watched **by the age of 18**: More than 17,000 hours.
- ☛ Amount of time average American will spend watching commercials **in his lifetime**: 2 years 7 months.
- ☛ First **Presidential TV broadcast**: Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1939 World's Fair, New York City.
- ☛ Number of **people who watched**: 1,000.
- ☛ First live TV broadcast **from the moon**: Astronaut (and Eagle Scout) Neil Armstrong stepping onto the moon, 1969. ✦ —Daniel P. George

Twice honored for hours of service



Patrick Phillips, 15, salutes as he is honored for becoming an Eagle Scout and earning the Congressional Award bronze medal.

MARYLAND

Scout soars to Eagle, Congressional Award

THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Patrick Phillips, 15, received Congress' highest honor for youth yesterday, the same day he received the Boy Scouts of America's most prestigious award.

The 15-year-old from Waldorf, Md., received his Eagle Scout award, as well as the Congressional Award bronze medal, for making his small community in Southern Maryland a better place to live.

Congressional Award National Director James Manning gave the award to Patrick, a sophomore at DeMatha Catholic High School in Hyattsville, during a ceremony at Moose Lodge 1709 in White Plains, Md.

The Congressional Award honors young people ages 14 to 23, see AWARD, page C1



Award director James Manning presents Patrick with the medal, Congress' highest honor for young people.



Johnny Sims places an Eagle Scout neckerchief on his son, Patrick Phillips, yesterday as his mother, Jerelyn Phillips, looks on.

AWARD

From page C1

who must set and achieve goals in four program areas: volunteer public service, personal development, physical fitness and expedition/exploration.

The awards went hand-in-hand for Patrick as he fulfilled the personal-development requirement by working toward his Eagle Scout award, earning 24 merit badges and induction into the Order of the Arrow along the way.

To fulfill the public service component, Patrick volunteered with the American Red Cross. He improved his tennis playing for physical fitness by advancing from the development team to the high-performance team at a camp at Andrews Air Force Base. Patrick's expedition was to coordinate a camping trip for his troop.

"By participating in the Congressional Award, I have gained an insight on how to deal with the people in my school, my tennis class, the people that I work with and my surrounding community," he said.

For his Eagle Scout project, Patrick planned and directed the construction of six bench-style picnic tables at Antioch Baptist Church, where he is a junior usher. He coordinated the design and procurement with church leaders and five businesses, which donated and delivered materials. During construction, he supervised a 26-person team of 10 adults and 16 Scouts.

"It's going to help later on in life. That's why I decided to stay in it," said Patrick, who hopes becoming an Eagle Scout will help him earn scholarships for college.

Patrick wants to become a phys-

ical therapist. He found likes medicine and helping after volunteering last summer at the Malcolm Grow Medical Center at Andrews Air Force Base.

Patrick carries a 3.1 grade average at DeMatha, where he plays oboe and alto saxophone in the concert band. His favorite activities include downhill skiing, whitewater rafting, backpacking and basketball.

The Congressional Award program is a nonpartisan partnership between Congress and the private sector. The only other meeting the imprimatur of the U.S. Congress is the Medal of Honor.

The Congressional Award was established in 1979 and has been given to more than 7,000 Americans, representing well over 10 million volunteer hours of community service. There is no nominating process for the award; rather, individuals bring their accomplishments to the attention of the committee that oversees the award.

To receive the gold medal, a person must perform more than 100 hours of service to the community; for the silver medal, 200 hours; for the bronze medal, 100 hours. Thus, older participants are more likely to qualify for the gold medal, which locally has gone to Lester, 24, of Great Falls, and Ellison, 24, of Springfield.

Only about two of 100 boys who join the Boy Scouts become Eagle Scouts.

"It's a long, hard road and why there are so few that make it to this rank," Scoutmaster Perrizo said.

"You should do it because it helps you in the future, and it's a good thing," said Patrick.

Will Toussaint and Clarence Williams contributed to this report.